

Appl. No. 09/648,590
Amdt. dated July 21, 2004
Reply to Office action of April 21, 2004

In the Claims:

Claims 1-3 are amended herein. New claims 5-14 are added.
The remaining claims are not amended in this response.

1. (currently amended) An image processing system comprising:

an image processing unit for processing input image; and
an output unit for outputting an image processed in the
image processing unit;

wherein said image processing unit has a function of cutting
out a background portion of the image and effecting color
specification and further has a function of specifying a method
of processing the background portion, and when printing the
image, said output unit recognizes the background portion on
basis of said color specification and carries out background
processing for the recognized background portion on basis of said
specified method of processing the background portion to replace
the background portion with a background pattern substantially
lacking perceptible unevenness.

2. (currently amended) An image processing system
according to claim 1, wherein said output unit converts pixels
into a the background pattern and prints replaces the background
portion with a printed discontinuous pattern on basis of the
specified method of processing the background portion.

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3. (currently amended) An image processing system according to claim 2, wherein said discontinuous pattern is chosen from one a group consisting of a stripe pattern and a dot pattern.

4. (original) An image processing system according to claim 1, wherein said color specification specifies a uniform density of a specific color.

5. (new) An image processing system comprising:
an image processing unit including:
means for replacing a background portion of an image with a specified background design;
means for specifying a method of processing the background portion; and
means for transmitting information indicating said specified method of processing and said image with the background portion replaced by said background design; and
an output unit including:
means for receiving image data and information indicating a received method of processing the background portion;
means for recognizing a background portion by detecting said specified background design in said received image data;
means for carrying out background processing for the recognized background portion based on said received method of

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processing, generating processed image data replacing the background design with a background pattern; and means for printing out said processed image data.

6. (new) The system of claim 5 wherein the background design includes a color specification.

7. (new) An image processing method comprising the steps of:

replacing a background portion of an image with a specified background indicator design;

specifying a method of processing the background portion; and

transmitting the image with the background portion replaced by the background indicator design, and information indicating the specified method of processing the background portion; and

at an output unit:

receiving image data and information indicating the method of processing the background portion;

recognizing the background portion by detecting the background indicator design in the received image data; and

processing the recognized background portion according to the received method of processing to replace the background indicator design of the background portion with a background pattern capable of being printed substantially without unevenness perceptible to the human eye.

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8. (new) The method of claim 7 wherein the background indicator design includes a color specification.

9. (new) The method of claim 7 wherein the step of processing the recognized background portion includes converting pixels of the background portion into a discontinuous pattern constituting the background pattern.

10. (new) The method of claim 7 wherein the background pattern is discontinuous.

11. (new) The method of claim 10 wherein the discontinuous background pattern is chosen from a group consisting of a striped pattern and a dotted pattern.

12. (new) An image processing system comprising:
an image processing unit; and
an output unit,
said image processing unit comprising
means for replacing the background portion of an image by a specified background design,
means for specifying a method of processing the background portion,
means for transmitting information indicating said specified method of processing; and
said image with the background portion replaced by said background design; and

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 said output unit comprising:

 means for receiving image data and information indicating a received method of processing the background portion,

 means for recognizing a background portion by detecting said specified background design in said received image data,

 means for carrying out background processing for the recognized background portion on basis of said received method of processing, generating processed image data, and

 means for printing out said processed image data.

13. (new) An image processing system according to claim 12, wherein said output unit converts pixels into the background pattern and replaces the background portion with a discontinuous pattern on basis of the specified method of processing the background portion.

14. (new) An image processing system according to claim 13, wherein said discontinuous pattern is chosen from a group consisting of a stripe pattern and a dot pattern.